



Senator John McKinney speaks with Senators Doc Gunther and Len Fasano about the proposed Liquefied Natural Gas Facility in Long Island Sound

Broadwater Proposal Task Force

As many of you are probably aware, TransCanada Corporation and Shell Oil collectively formed Broadwater Energy, which has proposed putting a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Facility approximately 10 miles off the Connecticut coast. Standing 10-stories high and stretching almost the length of four football fields, this Broadwater facility, as it has become known, would store imported LNG and ship it as a gas through underwater pipelines to New York and Connecticut.

I am extremely concerned about the potential impact this sort of facility would have on Long Island Sound, one of our state's most precious natural resources. As a result, I advocated for the formation of a Task Force to help protect Connecticut's environmental, public safety, and public health needs that are endangered by the Broadwater proposal.

Although legislation did not pass, Governor Rell, through Executive Order #9, created such a Task Force. The Governor's Task Force has been holding a series of informational hearings and public meetings to determine the potential impact of the Broadwater facility. You can follow the progress of the Task Force by logging onto www.ctlng.state.ct.us.



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2005
Legislative Report

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State Senator **John McKinney**

Dear Friend,

The 2005 regular session of the General Assembly ended in June; however, we have subsequently been called into special session on four separate occasions. This session, my seventh as your State Senator, was an unprecedented experience for me.

Since taking office on July 1, 2004, Governor Jodi Rell has led our state out of some of its darkest moments and has worked to restore faith and confidence in Connecticut's government. The tone she has set at the top has enabled the General Assembly to focus on the myriad of complex challenges facing our state in a much healthier atmosphere than that which had permeated our work when the cloud of an impeachment inquiry loomed over the Capitol. Elected officials from both parties and at every level of government must always make it their number one priority to uphold the public trust which has been placed in us.

As your State Senator, I have worked hard to try to keep you informed about the work your state government is doing. This legislative report summarizes some of the major actions taken during this year's legislative session. I hope you will find it interesting and informative. I also hope you will consider signing up for my periodic e-mail newsletter which provides updates on my legislative activities in Hartford.

If you would like to sign up to receive this newsletter, please visit www.senaterepublicans.ct.gov, click on my homepage and enter your e-mail address in the "Stay Informed" box.

If you have questions about the legislation discussed in this report, or any other matter concerning state government, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you in Hartford.

Sincerely,

John McKinney

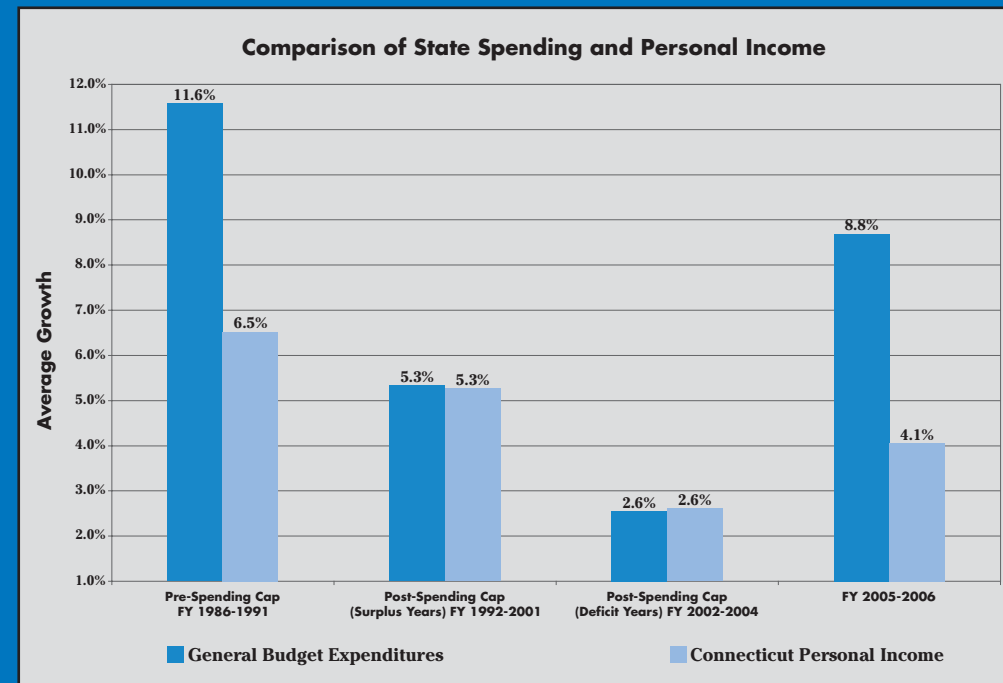
Controlling State Spending

I opposed the \$31.2 billion biennial budget bill that passed the legislature in June as the spending proposals in this plan were excessive, to say the least. Spending increased 8.8%, which is double the rate of inflation and double the rate upon which the average wage increased in Connecticut.

This budget also made a mockery of the state's constitutional spending cap. Back in 1992, 88% of state voters approved this cap, which in years past has helped keep spending under control. However, this year certain legislators chose to interpret the cap as a "guide." The result, in my opinion, was a budget package that was horribly misguided.

Government officials need to practice more sensible spending, much like the people of Connecticut do in their everyday lives. To demonstrate, I have included a chart that displays the growth in state spending compared to the growth in the personal income of Connecticut residents. As you can see, prior to this year the spending cap has been an effective tool in helping the state manage its spending. It's unfortunate that this year some legislators chose fiscal irresponsibility over financial prudence.

I will continue to adhere to the spending cap and to advocate for fiscal responsibility so state taxes are kept as low as possible and your tax dollars are spent wisely and efficiently.



Teachers' Retirement Fund

The legislature failed to act this year on a resolution, which I co-sponsored, calling for a constitutional amendment that would require Connecticut to fund the Teachers' Retirement Fund (TRF) at 100% every year. Currently, we have a \$5.2 billion liability in the TRF from years of under-funding. There are some who say we cannot afford to fund the TRF fully because it would require the state to make substantially greater payments to the fund each year. As one of the most vocal advocates for full funding in the General Assembly, I say we cannot afford NOT to do this.

Unfortunately, the measure was never taken up this year for a vote and the legislature only made a contribution of 69.7% of our current year's obligation. Thus, we are left yet again with a system that depends solely on the discretion of the legislature as to how much we fund or under-fund the TRF.

Transportation

The legislature's single most important accomplishment was in the area of transportation. For years we have had summit meetings, white papers and legislative hearings all saying the same thing, namely that service on Metro North railroad has been steadily deteriorating due to the aging of the rail cars, most of which are over 30 years old. Governor Rell proposed, and the legislature adopted, a plan to replace all the cars and also to build a new maintenance facility to service them. This plan will cost \$1.3 billion over nine years and also provides for improvements (but not expansion) of I-95.

Funding will come principally from a 3.1 percentage point increase in the petroleum gross receipts tax, and will also include a surcharge on Metro North tickets, which will not take effect until the new rail cars are delivered. While no one wants to see these taxes increased, action had been stalled for years due to uncertainty as to how the program would be funded. Most legislators accepted the proposition that rail commuters will accept the increases in return for knowing with certainty exactly what benefits they would derive.

Important and overdue as the plan is, it nevertheless represents a capital stock replacement, not an innovative new transportation policy. I believe it should be a first step towards a far reaching change in the state's transportation strategy in order to greatly enhance use of Metro North for intra-state commuting. Only in this way will we properly address the long-term challenges of increasing road congestion and rising gasoline prices.

Eminent Domain

In June, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Kelo v. City of New London* that New London was free to seize residents' homes in order to allow a private developer to rebuild the Fort Trumbull neighborhood where the homes were located. I do not believe government should have the power to take your home away from you and give it to another private person. Eminent domain should be limited to purely public purposes, such as schools or roads, and used only as a last resort.

By expanding the definition of "public use" to include "economic development" the government's power of eminent domain becomes one without limitation and guidelines, as well as very little judicial review. This is a critical attack upon the rights we all have to own property.

Consequently, I am extremely disappointed in the Democratic Majority's failure to act on this issue. When the decision came down, we, as a legislature, had an opportunity to pass a bill reassuring Connecticut homeowners that their rights will not be infringed upon. Unfortunately, the leadership opted instead to hold informational hearings to "study" the issue further. I promise to continue fighting for the protection of one of the most basic rights guaranteed in our Constitution – the right to own property.

Protecting Against Identity Theft

Personal identity theft is a growing problem throughout the nation. This year the legislature passed a measure that allows consumers to freeze their credit reports and requires businesses to inform consumers if their computerized personal information has been breached. Victims and potential victims of such crimes need to be notified immediately that their personal information may have been compromised. For information on how to protect yourself from identity theft, please visit the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at www.consumer.gov/idtheft/ or contact my office.

